

*February 19, 2010*

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Jerry McNerney (CA-11) yesterday sent a letter to Senator Dianne Feinstein expressing concern about her announced plan to develop an amendment that would lead to additional water transfers from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. In the letter, Congressman McNerney requests that Senator Feinstein provide evidence that her proposal would not harm farmers, families and businesses in the San Joaquin Delta region.

Contra Costa Supervisor Mary Piepho and San Joaquin County Supervisor Larry Ruhstaller, local elected officials who have worked closely with Congressman McNerney on water issues, offered these words in response to Congressman McNerney's letter:

"I am also concerned that this proposed amendment could prove harmful for families, farmers, and businesses in the San Joaquin Delta region," said Supervisor Mary Piepho. "I appreciate Congressman McNerney's collaboration with local officials and his advocacy on behalf of his constituents."

"I appreciate Congressman McNerney's work to make sure San Joaquin County's voice is heard as changes to the state's water policy are considered," said Supervisor Larry Ruhstaller. "We need to make sure any proposed changes would not adversely affect the many families and farmers in San Joaquin County who depend on the San Joaquin Delta for water. Together with the Board of Supervisors, I'm going to continue to work with Congressman McNerney to stand up for what's right for San Joaquin County."

The text of the letter from Congressman McNerney to Senator Feinstein is below:

February 18, 2010

Senator Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senate  
331 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein:

I am writing in response to your announcement that you are developing an amendment that would lead to additional water transfers from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. I ask that you provide convincing evidence that your proposal would not cause harm to farmers, families, and businesses in the San Joaquin Delta region, and if such evidence is not available, I respectfully

request that you withdraw your amendment.

I am honored to represent large portions of Contra Costa County and San Joaquin County, which sit at the heart of the San Joaquin Delta region. As you know, a significant part of this area also forms the northern segment of the San Joaquin Valley. Communities throughout the San Joaquin Valley – including in San Joaquin County – have been especially hard hit by the economic downturn. Unemployment exceeds 20 percent in many areas, and the Valley has suffered from some of the nation's highest foreclosure rates. The region deserves better, and I am confident we share a common goal of improving the economy throughout the San Joaquin Valley.

I am deeply concerned, however, that your proposed amendment could cause additional economic harm to the San Joaquin Delta and northern San Joaquin Valley. The Delta region is home to vibrant communities and a rich agricultural tradition that rely on the availability of a healthy, fresh water supply for farming, drinking, tourism, and other uses. Poor statewide management of water resources has led to reduced water quality in the San Joaquin Delta, which poses serious challenges for family farmers and threatens drinking water supplies. Poor water quality in the Delta is a threat to the environment, public health, and to the local economy.

I will reserve final judgment of your amendment until legislative language is made available. However, based on information currently released by your office, I fear that your proposal could further erode water quality and cause economic harm to our constituents in the San Joaquin Delta region. I look forward to working with you to provide relief in the regions hardest hit by the weak economy, and I request your personal assurance that you will only offer an amendment that will benefit the entire state of California.

Sincerely,

Jerry McNerney  
Member of Congress